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A N

E S S A Y

ON THE

EXPEDIENCY

OF A

National Militia.

WITH

PROPOSALS for Raiſing and Supporting a Military Force ſufficient for our Security at home: To be furniſhed by the ſeveral Counties, after the manner of Militia, and continually employed in the Service of the Publick, *without any additional Expence to the Subject.*

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A N

E S S A Y, &c.

THE Buſineſs of a Militia, which now ſo much engages every one's Attention, is an Affair of the utmoſt Importance. Experience, however, has ſhewn, that no Dependence can be placed on it, as modelled at preſent. The Introduction of Regulations, though neceſſary, muſt of Courſe be attended with ſome Difficulties; and if great Care is not taken to keep an equal Ballance of Power in the Body-Politick; or, as recommended from the Throne, if the framing of a Militia be

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not planned and regulated with equal Regard to the juſt Rights of the Crown on the one Hand, and of the People on the other, an Alteration may be productive of the moſt dreadful Conſequences.

We know that the Conteſt about the Militia, though not the ſole Cauſe of the civil War, was the moſt immediate Occaſion of kindling it into a Flame, which proved the Deſtruction not only of Monarchy, but of Liberty, and the Conſtitution. A military Force, for Defence againſt a foreign Invaſion, is neceſſary to the very Being of this and every other Nation; and though, from the peculiar Happineſs of Great Britain, as an Iſland, we are leſs expoſed to foreign Inſults and Incurſions, than moſt other Parts of Europe; yet it begins now to be univerſally acknowledged, that a powerful Land-Force, of ſome Kind or other, is become requiſite for our Preſervation,

as

as the King of France has continually large Bodies of Troops almoſt within ſight of our Coaſts, and but a few Hours Sail from them: ſo that nobody now thinks it impoſſible for ſmall Bodies of French Troops to land and give us ſome Diſturbance, by ſetting Fire to different Parts of the Kingdom at the ſame Time; nor are they without ſufficient Opportunities for eſcaping the Vigilance of our Fleets, in Fogs, Calms, and dark Nights; the very Winds, that would favour their Deſcent on us, might lock up our Fleets in our own Harbours *.

We find that our ſtanding Forces are thought to be only ſufficient for our Defence againſt ſuch ſmall Numbers of the French as may thus happen to be ſmug-

* It has been ſaid, that when the Prince of Orange came to be our Deliverer, the very Elements fought for him, and ſuffered not the Engliſh Navy to approach him.

gled in upon us; and that even the Aid of foreign Mercenaries, which has ſo frighted our People, has not been thought ſufficient to frighten our Enemies.

For, to ſtrike Terror into the French, and effectually to ſecure ourſelves, a great Part of our Navy has been employed hitherto merely to guard our Coaſts.

Thus have we been obliged to give up the Advantage of our Superiority at Sea, and to let ſlip the faireſt Opportunity for deſtroying the Ships and ruining the Trade of the French, (beſides leaving ſome of the moſt valuable of our Poſſeſſions abroad in too defenceleſs a State) only becauſe we were not in a *Condition* to face ſuch an Army, even on our own Ground, as might poſſibly be brought againſt us, if our Coaſts had been left

more

more open, and the Enemy had been hardy enough to riſk all the Dangers of the Sea, and hazard an Attack from our Land-Forces, whilſt they were under the Confuſion that is unavoidable in diſembarking.

But the Increaſe of the naval Power of this our moſt inveterate Enemy, expoſes us more than ever to the Danger of a very formidable Invaſion, by a large Army; notwithſtanding our naval Force is at preſent ſuperior to it. For if they have the Means in their Hands to obtain ſuch an Acceſſion to their Power as the Union with a Spaniſh Fleet would give, or if any Diſgrace ſhould happen to us again, like that which has befallen our Fleet in the Mediterranean, by an Admiral being more anxious about ſaving his Ships than ſaving the Nation: In either of theſe Caſes, which are at leaſt ſuppoſe-

able,

able, we can only have Recourſe to Land-Forces; and therefore nobody heſitates in acknowledging the Neceſſity of ſuch an Augmentation of our military Power as may prepare us for an Event ſo diſaſtrous; though we are not agreed as to the Method moſt proper for the Purpoſe.

A national Militia, which is ſo earneſtly deſired, and ſo heartily addreſſed for by the Majority of the People, demands proper Conſideration; tho' ſome amongſt us, who reaſon very ſpecioufly, and draw their Remarks from Hiſtory and Obſervation, inſiſt on the great Danger of placing the military Force in the Body of the People, who, 'tis ſaid, would be ungovernable, if entruſted with Arms, which thro' the Influence of Faction and Prevalence of Party-Rage, might introduce Cruelty and Confuſion, and ter-

minate

minate in the Diſappointment at leaſt, if not in an unconſtitutional Subjection, of the deluded People.

Again, it is ſaid, that a warlike Spirit, how commendable ſoever in ſome Inſtances, would be found inconſiſtent with the Spirit of Induſtry; and this has led many People to queſtion, whether, in this trading Country, a ſerviceable Militia can be formed, without the utmoſt Prejudice to our Trades and Manufactures.

The Argument alſo of Danger to the Government, without a proper military Force to ſupport it, is earneſtly preſſed by others, who inſiſt, that as regular Troops only can be ſufficient againſt Inſurrections, regular Troops are likewiſe the only ſecure Defence againſt the common Enemy: That we might put our Truſt in a Militia, if our foreign

reign Neighbours had nothing but Militia to bring againſt us: That though Engliſhmen are unqueſtionably as brave by Nature as Frenchmen, and always ſhewed themſelves ſo, when the Armies of both Nations were only compoſed of Militia*; yet, now, as the French King and all the Princes of the Continent make it their Study, and employ their Treaſures to render themſelves terrible to their Neighbours, in maintaining large Bodies of regular diſciplined Troops, it would be Madneſs in us to put our Truſt in any Militia that ſhould not be equal in Point of Diſcipline to their beſt regulated Troops.

Such is the Diverſity of Opinions oncerning a Militia, and ſo uncertain

* A few Ages ago there was no ſuch Thing in Europe as what we now call a ſtanding Army; there was nothing but Militia in any Country; but now there is not a ſovereign State but keeps up a Body of regular Troops.

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are the Conſequences, that 'tis no Wonder our Legiſlators proceed in this Matter with the utmoſt Circumſpection.

The Poſſibility of deſtroying our Conſtitution, by erecting a new Power that may prove ſuperior to the Civil Power, and become the Cauſe of its Overthrow, would perhaps for ever prevent the Experiment of a Militia, if the preſent important Criſis did not compel the Government to have Recourſe to ſome ſuch Expedient. And indeed the Exigency of Affairs ſeems to have reduced our Legiſlators to this Alternative; either to purſue a Meaſure ſo diſagreeable to the People as raiſing in a ſhort Time * a very large

* Though Laws may be framed that will expedite the raiſing of Recruits, yet Length of Time, and ſome Experience, is neceſſary to make them good Soldiers.

Army at an immenſe Expence, (for the Power of the King and Parliament to do this cannot be queſtioned) or elſe to riſque all the unforeſeen Conſequences of a Militia, and introduce the Uſe of Arms, and revive a martial Spirit among the People: For the taking foreign Mercenaries into our Pay, and bringing them over to defend our Coaſts, reflects ſuch Diſhonour on the Nation, and is ſo odious to the People, that it will ſcarcely be attempted again by any Miniſtry.

The Reſtoration of the Militia in ſome new Form, to be rendered ſerviceable, has been ſeveral Times attempted before now, and ſome of the ableſt Heads of the paſt and the preſent Times have been employed in framing a Plan for it: But the Difficulty of contriving a commodious Militia-Scheme for ſuch a Government as ours, has perhaps hitherto

therto prevented the Undertaking from being ſucceſsful.

By the Generality of People indeed this Matter has been treated as the eaſieſt Thing in the World to be ſettled. A great deal has been ſaid about a conſtitutional Militia *, reſtoring martial Diſcipline, and reviving a warlike Spirit among the People; and then every Thing would be right, and they would do all the Buſineſs.

Addreſſes for theſe good Purpoſes have been ſigned perhaps by Thouſands, who we may charitably ſuppoſe, know not what they aſk; for ſurely they do not deſire to be ſubjected to a perſonal Attendance at the Place of Rendezvous, on

* By the antient Conſtitution of the Government the King had at his Diſpoſal the Militia of the Realm, who were kept in conſtant Diſcipline and Exerciſe.

every Summons of the Lord-Lieutenant of a County, or whoever is by the Miniſtry appointed to the Command; and this perhaps merely for the Sake of learning an Exerciſe, or for performing it at a Review; which muſt be ſubmitted to by every effective Militia; and ſuch a Power thereby unavoidably lodged in the Crown over the Perſons of Men as would be thought inconſiſtent with our Liberties: For a conſtitutional Militia being the Object in View, this neceſſary Power is inconteſtably in the King, it not being imaginable that a greater Power ſhould be inveſted in the Hands of any Subject than is truſted in the Hands of the King *.

For

* The Parliament, in 1642, pretended to infer from the King's Conduct, that he had Deſigns to render himſelf abſolute; and that the only Way to hinder ſuch Deſigns was to put the Militia into ſafe Hands, independent of the King, and thereby prevent his having any Power over the Militia. But Rapin

For Maſter-Tradeſmen, Manufacturers, Shopkeepers, &c. to have large Fines impoſed on them for Non-attendance, would be thought very oppreſſive; and to compel Gentlemen, Yeomen, and Farmers to attend at all Times, or even to accept of Commiſſions in the Militia, would be deemed a greater Hardſhip than ſubmitting to any Tax for the Support of regular Troops, and would ſoon produce Petitions for Relief from ſuch Burthens, and for a yearly re-eſtabliſhing of ſuch Numbers of ſtanding Forces as the Parliament may find it neceſſary to appoint.

But let us ſuppoſe theſe Difficulties to be removed, and the Militia ſuit-

Rapin ſays, that the Parliament did not deny that, in the ordinary Courſe of Government, the Right of ſettling the Militia, and appointing thoſe who were to command it under him, was ſolely in the King. *Tind. Con. Rapin, Folio, Vol.* II. *P.* 430.

able

able to the preſent Times, and reſembling the antient Militia † in nothing but the Name; thoſe only to attend a Muſter whoſe Convenience it may ſuit; that no Man who can find one to ſerve for him ſhall be obliged to ſerve in Perſon; —will not ſuch a Militia of courſe conſiſt of the loweſt and meaneſt of the People, greatly deficient with reſpect to true Courage, unequal in Size, different in Dreſs: in ſhort, of ſuch Wretches as would be cheaply hired, becauſe indigent *.

But

† What we call antient Militia were regular well-diſciplined Troops: Every Man who was not a Vaſſal was a Soldier, bred to Arms, and obliged to follow his Lord to the Wars whenever it was required of him.

* The Muſter of ſuch a Militia muſt make a Scene little better than Dryden has humorouſly deſcribed it:

'And raw in Fields the rude Militia ſwarms;—
'Mouths without Hands, maintain'd at vaſt Expence:
'In Peace a Charge, in War a weak Defence.
'Stout, once a Year, they march a bluſtering Band;
'And ever, but in Times of Need, at Hand.

'Of

But, to ſet it in a better Light, ſuppoſe theſe Subſtitutes, perhaps of Indolence, are not permitted to rank in the Militia; that we have a great many brave Gentlemen and Yeomen, beſides common People who depend upon their Labour for Subſiſtence, as perſonally brave as any People in the World, and would as willingly face an Enemy in the Defence of their Country: Yet hardly one of them would know how to do his Duty in a Squadron or Battalion *, and conſequently muſt fall

'Of ſeeming Arms they make a ſhort Eſſay,
'Then haſten to get drunk, the Buſ'neſs of the Day.'

* Notwithſtanding the Deſcriptions that have been given of the Bravery and Intrepidity of the American Militia, which led People to expect great Things from them, we find that every Indian Incurſion alarms them, and makes them call out for Aſſiſtance from England.

An ingenious Gentleman, in Itinerant Obſervations in America, ſays, 'That wherever you travel in Maryland (as alſo in Virginia and Carolina)

you

fall into Confuſion as ſoon as engaged in Action with a well-trained diſciplined Army, that can change its Situation, and alter its Diſpoſition, in a Moment, at

you are conſtantly aſtoniſhed at the Number of Colonels, Majors, and Captains, that you hear mentioned: In ſhort the whole Country ſeems at firſt to you a Retreat of Heroes; but alas! to behold the Muſters of their Militia, would induce a Man to nauſeate a Saſh, and hold a Sword for ever in Deriſion. Diverſity of Weapons and Dreſſes, Unfizeableneſs of the Men, and want of the leaſt Grain of Diſcipline in their Officers or them, render the whole ridiculous and contemptible.

Are we then to place our Confidence, on every Emergency, in ſuch Militia, collected at Random, as the preſent State of the Nation would furniſh, which would either be compoſed of the very loweſt and moſt abandoned of the People, influenced by no Spirit of Bravery or Liberty, and regardleſs of the Fate of the Nation, having themſelves nothing to loſe; or of ſuch Tradeſmen, and others, who, when compelled to this Service, would very reluctantly quit the Occupations and Manufactories they were already employed in, to the ſo much ſuperior Benefit of the Nation and of themſelves?

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the Command of the General, and ſtill preſerve Regularity and Order.

From all this we may conclude, that it is neceſſary for Men to be well diſciplined, as well as brave, in order to conſtitute a ſerviceable military Power.

That anſwering at a Roll-calling in a Country Church-yard, and going thro ſuch Exerciſe as may there be performed by a Handful of Men, will not make even a courageous Man a good Soldier, according to the modern Methods of fighting.

That it requires two or three Years for a brave and tractable Man to attain to a ſufficient Knowledge of this fighting Buſineſs, to be Maſter of his Trade.

And that it is impoſſible to make the common People learn it, much leſs practiſe it (as it is not their Profeſſion, and

none of them live by it) unleſs military Tenures are reſtored, or a ſelect Part of the People are appointed to the Service, and paid for it.

And, notwithſtanding any Laws that may be made for aſſembling them, and for furniſhing them with Arms, ſuch Men who have been from their Infancy bred up in Eaſe and Security, without being ever expoſed to Danger, will be too apt to ſave themſelves the Trouble of practiſing military Exerciſes; and, for Want of Experience in them, will be liable to be defeated and diſperſed at the Approach of a brave foreign Enemy.

In ſhort, there requires no more to convince us of the Puſillanimity of a modern Militia, than their Behaviour in the two laſt Rebellions.

In November 1715, when the northern Rebels came from Penrith to Appleby,

pleby, it was expected that the *Posse Comitatus*, and the Militia of Cumberland and Westmoreland, which, by the Care and Vigilance of the Earl of Carlisle, and the Lord Viscount Lonsdale, had been gathered together, to the Number of three or four thousand Men, would have made a Stand; but, notwithstanding the Encouragement they received from those two noble Lords, and from the Half-pay Officers, who were ready to head them, they all betook themselves to their Heels upon the Approach of the Rebels. Thus near double the Number ran away before those who were themselves little better than Militia, and who fled soon after before General Carpenter, though they were double the Number of his Forces. And every one knows that a Parcel of rascally Highlanders, in Number about four or five thousand, march'd in the last Rebellion through Millions of People,

into the Heart of England, without meeting with any Reſiſtance; though they ran back again as faſt as poſſible at the Approach of the regular Troops: But the Train'd-bands of any County attempted nothing; nor were they any where aſſembled except in Middleſex and in Kent.

But it will be ſaid, that a Militia, which is ſo generally become the Cry, that it ſeems the Voice of the People, is not to be our ſole Support and Defence; that a ſufficient Number of regular Troops muſt be kept up to anſwer the Purpoſes of the Government, for Guards and Garriſons, and to quell Inſurrections; and, in Time of War, to co-operate with the Militia againſt the common Enemy.

It may be preſumed, that the ſevere martial Laws which are found to be neceſſary for the well governing of the Army,

Army, will not be extended to the Militia; nor the ſame Exactneſs of Diſcipline, and the Obſervation of nice Punctilios, be expected from the beſt Train'd-bands: Will not therefore great Diſorder and Confuſion ariſe among Troops governed by military Laws and Cuſtoms ſo very different? Will not the regular Troops, knowing their own Superiority, deſpiſe the Militia; and, in return, the Militia treat regular Soldiers with Inſolence and Contempt, as more ſubject to the Authority of Superiors, and who cannot run Riot with Impunity like Militia-men? Have we not Reaſon to fear that there are ſome who would rejoice at an Opportunity of making Diſtinctions between the Crown Army and the Country Army; and, if theſe regular and irregular Troops were to ſerve together in all the Operations of War, would not thoſe

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Diſtinctions create ſuch great Animoſities between the two Sorts of Troops, that they would be as likely to attack one another as to unite in attacking the Enemy * ?

But, as all the Arguments that can be urged to convince us that no Dependance can be had on irregular Troops, ſeem to be induſtriouſly ſpread every Day, with a Deſign to reconcile us to an Army, either of foreign or native Mercenaries, is it not to be feared that if our Hopes and Expectations from the Militia are turned into a Diffidence of it, that the Nation may be carried into the other Extream, and have Recourſe to ſuch an Army, as our dernier Reſort ?

* Vid. A Pamphlet juſt publiſhed, on the Subject of Militias, entitled, *A Word in Time to both Houſes of Parliament*; in which, among many exceptionable Paſſages, are ſome that deſerve the ſerious Attention of the Public.

—And in this View all the Expence of ſupporting, and Danger of truſting, any Army compoſed of the Subjects of Great Britain, and thoſe in Alliance with us, will be diſregarded, in Compariſon with the more dreadful Fate of ſubmitting to a French one, and the Sacrifice that in conſequence of it muſt certainly be made of our Lives, Properties, Laws, Liberty, and Religion, to the deſpotic Power of a French King, or the arbitrary Will of a tributary Viceroy, with a pretended divine Title, and hereditary Right to enſlave us.

Suppoſing the diſagreeable Circumſtance of having foreign Aſſiſtance to be over, we may conſider a ſtanding Army of Natives to protect us, as being as much preferable to a foreign Army, that would keep us in Subjection to a Tyrant: Yet the being reduced to the Neceſſity of forming large Armies, even

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of thoſe who are Members of the ſame Society, (and have therefore an Intereſt in, and Regard for, the Proſperity of the Kingdom) and making them a diſtinct Body, and the Profeſſion of Arms their only Employment, is an Event juſtly to be feared, on account of the Danger we are expoſed to of becoming a Prey to thoſe we hire for our Defence, as they are not in the Power of the People, if themſelves will oppoſe it.

If ever it becomes neceſſary to keep up a ſtanding Army ſufficient to repel ſuch Numbers of French as may be poured in upon us, as in caſe of our Coaſts being left open, or of their Superiority in a Sea-Engagement or two, the Effect of ſuch an Alteratiou muſt be very conſiderable; for, though our Trades and Commerce might flouriſh, and the Honour and Power of the Nation might be preſerved, with reſpect

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to foreign Concerns, as it was under Oliver Cromwell, yet the internal Frame of our Government muſt be ſhaken; the additional Weight and Influence that raiſing, quartering, Payment of, and appointing Officers to ſo large an Army, will probably give to the Crown, muſt either deſtroy Britiſh Freedom and Independency, (the Glory and Boaſt of thoſe who enjoy it, and Envy of Foreigners) or ſo alter its Nature, that tho' the Name may be retained, the Reality will be loſt.

The certain Conſequences of keeping up ſo large an Army, tho' fatal ones may be expected, cannot, however, be foretold; and though the Liberties of the Subject would be in the utmoſt Danger, yet perhaps it might prove no permanent Security to the Crown *. And, though

*Every King of Great Britain would perhaps have more to fear than to hope from a large ſtanding

though ſome Nations in Europe have been deprived of their Liberties, by Armies that were devoted to the Will of their Prince, yet the Examples of former Times allow us to hope, that amongſt Britiſh Troops, a Regard for their Country, and a Spirit of Liberty, will for ever prevail; that they will always behave like the Army in the Reign of King James, and nobly diſdain to enſlave their Country.

After all, as there is no Danger ſo great to contend againſt, as the exorbitant Power of a numerous Army, whether compoſed of Foreigners or of Natives, whether commanded by a crowned Head, or by Generals of its own ſetting up, let us diſpaſſionately conſider the Neceſſity there is to oppoſe

Army, if he was to aim at arbitrary Power, as they would either refuſe to fight againſt their Country, or would more probably join the People againſt his tyrannical Government.

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all farther Extenſion of mercenary Troops, as well as to diſcourage a Reliance on any ſuch Militia as has hitherto been propoſed, for the Defence of every Thing that can be dear to a free People.

As every true Engliſhman, Lover of his Country, is ſenſible that we now have Liberty and Privileges to take Care of, as well as a common Enemy to guard againſt; and deſires both to provide a Security for thoſe invaluable Bleſſings, and to ſee his Country in a good Poſture of Defence; he will therefore be pleaſed to have any practicable Method propoſed which may prove the happy Medium between the Danger, on one Hand, of introducing arbitrary Power as the Prerogative of the Crown, ſupported by ſuch a mercenary Army; or, what is worſe, the Subverſion of Monarchy, and our Subjection to a military Go-

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vernment: and the Danger, on the other Hand, of popular Commotions, Seditions, and Inſurrections, by putting Arms into the Hands of all the People promiſcuouſly, in Purſuance of ſuch a Militia Scheme, who, having the Power, would never want a Pretence for what they would call doing themſelves Right, which would ſoon involve us in all the Horrors of Anarchy.

It is, however, little better than Declamation, to ſet forth the Thoughts of private People on the beſt Means of publick Defence. His Majeſty has pointed out a national Militia as one good Reſource in caſe of general Danger; which Militia, well modelled, is by the honourable the Houſe of Commons declared to be one proper Security for his Majeſty's Perſon and Realm; and may beſt tend to the Satisfaction of the People. But as no Plan for eſtabliſhing a Militia

is yet known to be ſettled ; or even, if the Wiſdom of Parliament has laid the beſt-regulated Scheme that is poſſible ; yet, as it is not made publick, every Individual, if not in Duty bound (in Caſes tending to the Good of the Nation) to lay what he may think a proper Expedient before the Publick, is at leaſt at Liberty to offer his Sentiments : Eſpecially as nothing on the Subject has yet appeared that is unexceptionable, or that has met with general Approbation. Notwithſtanding every Propoſal may have its Defects, ſome ſkilful Hand, it may be hoped, will correct the Errors of others, and, from the whole, form ſo perfect a Plan as will provide for our Defence and Security, without diſtreſſing our Trade, without drawing away Hands from our Manufactures, without endangering the Liberty of the Subject, or Prerogatives of the Crown, and may induce his Majeſty and the Parliament to

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paſs it into a Law. As no Meaſures but ſuch as are adequate to the Purpoſe ought to be purſued, and as it has ſo often been proved that no Militia is fit for the important Work of national Defence, but what is in all Reſpects a Match for any equal Number of regular Troops that can be brought againſt it; therefore no Scheme deſerves publick Countenance and Protection but ſuch as propoſes the arming and diſciplining the hardieſt and moſt robuſt of his Majeſty's Subjects, who, from frequent Uſe, may become as expert in the Arts, and, from conſtant Labour and good Pay, be as well enabled to go through the Fatigues, of War as the beſt diſciplined Troops in the World.

It may be objected that ſuch Troops would not be a Militia, but Soldiers, to all Intents and Purpoſes, as much as any

in

in the World. So they ought to be, or they are not fit to be relied on. But why are they not likewiſe Militia? Soldiers by Profeſſion are comparatively but a modern Invention, and there is no doubt but the antient Militia-men were as well verſed in the Warfare of thoſe Times as the beſt Soldiers are now: They all learned the then Art of War from their Youth; and, if there are ſuch Improvements made within an Age or two in the Arts of deſtroying our Fellow-Creatures, the Men who are to preſerve us ought, by frequent and conſtant Exerciſe, and ſtrict Diſcipline, to be made Maſters of thoſe Arts, though they may never be employed but in our Defence.

It has been lately ſaid, that 'our 'ſtanding Army is in Effect but a re-'gular Militia; Part of the People, paid 'by the People, and reduced and diſ-

'banded

' banded by the People ;' * and as the having a Militia well-regulated, well-diſciplined, or, as it has ſometimes been expreſſed, having a ſufficient Militia, can mean very little ſhort of Perfection in the Exerciſe of a Soldier ; the Publick may, if it avails itſelf of the preſent happy Diſpoſition of the People, form an Army of complete Troops, raiſed and maintained as a Militia, (preſerving a near Reſemblance to that which is already formed in the Ideas of the People) that will be the moſt capable of hard Service, and the Fatigues of War of any Troops in the World, ſuch as will anſwer all the good Purpoſes of a ſtanding Army, and at the ſame Time be very ſerviceable to the Publick in other Capacities beſides fighting. If no better Method offers for this Purpoſe, that which is intended to be hereby propoſed may take Place, and is therefore humbly ſubmitted

* WORD IN TIME *to both Houſes of Parliament.*

to

to the Conſideration of the Publick, viz.

That all Statute Labour on the publick Roads ſhall be compounded for, and Money raiſed on the People, in lieu of it; and that for the future all the Work on the Roads ſhall be performed by able Men, choſen by the People, and to be paid according to the common Rate of Labour.

That all ſuch Men, being the Servants of the Publick, and maintained by it in ſo particular a Manner, muſt devote themſelves to its Intereſt; and ſhall be liable, from the Time they are firſt appointed, to ſerve it in a military Capacity.

That, as by the Laws in force every Houſholder, Cottager, and Labourer, is obliged to work on the Roads, or

 contribute

contribute Eighteen-pence per Day, ſo every ſuch Perſon under the Age of fifty, and above eighteen, ſhall be liable to be choſen for a Militia-Man at the Veſtry of any Pariſh where he ſhall happen to reſide, but ſhall be intitled to his Diſcharge after having ſerved a certain Number of Years.

That ſuch Men ſhall be enrolled in Companies, and act both in their military Capacity, and other * Employment, under the Direction of the Officers that may be properly appointed to diſcipline and govern them.

That a large Proportion of ſuch Militia ſhall form Troops of Cavalry, to be

* Some States in Europe have employed Engineers of the firſt Note, with very large Salaries, in making Roads; ſurely ſubaltern Officers, if well paid for it, need not diſdain to inſpect the Labour of their Men, and to plan and form any publick Work.

mounted

mounted on, and to break, in the neceſſary Manner, all the Horſes that are to be employed in the Repair of the Roads.

That proper Days be ſet apart for the Exerciſe of this Militia in ſmall Companies, and for collecting together large Bodies, in order to practiſe them in their Duty when formed into Battalions, that by Uſe they may become alert; and there is no room to doubt of their being brave.

That the Labour on the Roads ſhall be performed as much as poſſible in Companies, to be ſeparated at no great Diſtance from the Head-Quarters.

That, as ſoon as the Exigencies of the State will permit, as many of the Individuals of his Majeſty's Troops as can be ſpared ſhall be incorporated with this

Militia, for the Sake of forwarding exact Diſcipline.

That Draughts ſhall be made, from Time to Time, of ſuch Numbers as the Government ſhall think fit, in every County, to be taken off from a great Part of the Labour on the Roads, for the Sake of attaining to higher Degrees of Perfection in the military Art.

That the Parliament ſhall appoint, from Year to Year, the preciſe Number that ſhall be entirely exempt from this Labour, for the Purpoſes of Guards and Garriſons.

That as the private Men in his Majeſty's Guards, &c. ſhall happen to die, become old and infirm, or be diſcharged, they ſhall be always replaced by Draughts from this Militia.

That

That proper Regulations be made: That ſuch Men as ſhall from Time to Time be newly appointed to ſerve in this Militia, and ſuch Horſes as may be freſh bought, ſhall be employed in the more private Roads; and that they advance forward, as they become more perfect.

That every Pariſh, in the united Kingdoms, ſhall chuſe ſuch a Number of Men, and bear ſuch a Proportion of the Charge as the Value of their Lands ſhall amount to, on an equal Rate; that is to ſay, three Pounds a Year, to be collected for every fifty Pounds per Annum in Houſes or Land, and ſmaller Bargains in Proportion, down to ten Pounds a Year, as an Equivalent for the ſix Days Work, at ten Shillings per Day, which the Laws in being lay on every fifty Pound per Annum.

That

That every other Perſon, now liable to work on the Highways, or to hire one in his Stead, pay ſix Shillings a Year, as an Equivalent for the ſix Days Statute-Labour that he is now liable to.

By ſuch an Inſtitution as this, the State might enjoy all the Advantage of Security againſt foreign Invaſions, that it might derive from a large ſtanding Army, and at the ſame Time avoid the Evils of it, great Expence, Luxury, and Debauchery; and, in conſequence of the preſent idle Life of Soldiers, immenſe Detriment to the Publick from ſo many Hands unemployed in uſeful Labour; whereas, by this Method, one hundred thouſand Men (above ten Men to a Pariſh, on an Average) would be conſtantly maintained and employed in improving the Roads, to the great Benefit of the Publick;

Publick: For the Soldiery have always been eſteemed the beſt Makers of Roads.

As to the Number of Men to be raiſed by this Scheme, it is not neceſſary to be here exactly aſcertained; but if, according to the Value of the Lands in each Pariſh, there were to be appointed from two to twenty Militia-Men, to the Amount of ten Men, on an Average, to every Pariſh, it would raiſe nearly one hundred thouſand Men; for which Number ample Proviſion would be made, according to the Rate before mentioned.

The yearly Value of the Lands in England is now generally reckoned at twenty Millions *. Three

* If Dr. Davenant ſpeaks Truth, the whole Rental of England, in the Year 1600, did not exceed ſix Millions, and the Price of Lands was at twelve Years Purchaſe. In 1688 the Rental was fourteen

Three Pounds per Annum on every fifty Pounds in twenty Millions would produce	1,200,000
Suppoſe the Number of People in England to be eight Millions, and that two Millions are liable to Statute-Labour, to be compounded for at ſix Shillings each. - -	600,000
The Turnpikes * all over England may be ſuppoſed to produce yearly - -	100,000
	1,900,000

fourteen Millions, and the Price of Land was eighteen Years Purchaſe; ſo that, within this Period, the landed Intereſt roſe from ſeventy-two to two hundred and fifty-two Millions. As Land now yields at leaſt one Third more, for twenty-ſeven Years Purchaſe, twenty Millions cannot be thought too much; the ſmall Sum paid in many Parts of England to the Land-Tax may be offered as another Proof of it.

* Two hundred Turnpikes, each raiſing five hundred Pounds yearly, will produce one hundred thouſand Pounds.

To this muſt be added the Sum granted yearly by Parliament, as the Exigencies of State require.

TheSum, already granted for maintaining forty-nine thouſand effective Men, with Commiſſion and Non-commiſſion-Officers for the Service of the enſuing Year, amounts to 1,213,746

Alſo for the Pay of General and Staff-Officers. 47,000

3,160,746

To all this muſt be added the neat Produce of a Tax of this Nature in Scotland, at a Rate more eaſy to the Labourer, on Account of the Lowneſs of Wages there.

Theſe Calculations are only in groſs; the Nature of the Argument requiring

no more, as this is ſufficient to demonſtrate that a Proviſion would be made for one hundred thouſand Men, and a ſufficient Number of Horſes*, to be employed on the Roads only in Times of Peace, and for a Defence in Time of War; for, as one Million two hundred and twenty thouſand Pounds is a Proviſion for about fifty thouſand regular Troops, there would be, according to the above Calculations, about one Million nine hundred and ninety-three thouſand to pay the other fifty thouſand, and increaſe the Pay of ſuch Regulars as may become incorporated with the Militia, to the full Sum of one Shilling per Day to

* It has been a ſtrong Objection to moſt Militia Schemes, that proper Proviſion has not been made for raiſing Troops of Horſe. The late Duke of Marlborough has been ſaid to give it as his Opinion, that Cavalry would prevent the landing of an Enemy, by the Quickneſs of their Motions near the Coaſts.

private

private Men; for the Number of Field and Staff-Officers already appointed would perhaps be thought ſufficient, and the Charges of Guards and Garriſons in Gibraltar, &c. would be yearly provided for by Parliament; four hundred and twenty-three thouſand nine hundred and ſixty-three Pounds being granted for defraying theſe Charges for this Year 1757.

The Advantage of having ſuch a Number of Men as might be conſtantly employed on the Roads, are inconceivable, no ſmall Part of which would be the taking away all Occaſion for the moſt vexatious and oppreſſive Methods of Preſentments, Indictments, and the Train of Expences conſequent thereon, which there is ſcarce a Pariſh in the Kingdom but has felt in its Turn. This Method of repairing the Roads would ſoon put an effectual Stop to ſuch Proceedings, as

every Perſon of the leaſt Diſcernment muſt allow; for are not the publick Roads more likely to be kept good under the Direction of Gentlemen who would ſpend great Part of their Time about them, and have an almoſt abſolute Command * of the Men employed, than under our common Superviſors, who gegenerally want the requiſite Knowledge and Experience, and, having other Buſineſs of their own, are deſirous to be excuſed as much as poſſible from this Duty? It is notorious that ſome of them have been ſo incapable, that the

* Not that ſuch Militia ſhould be liable to the ſudden and ſevere Puniſhments that are now inflicted on Soldiers by Courts Martial, except in Time of War; but Diſtinctions ſhould be made between Times of Peace and Times of War; and martial Law, in its full Force, take Place only from the Declaration of War: The more free and eaſy Men are in their Circumſtances, in Time of Peace, the more pleaſed they will be with their Situation, and the more eager to defend thoſe Privileges they partake of.

Statute-

Statute-Labour of Pariſhes has done Miſchief, inſtead of Good, through a Miſapplication of the Materials they have uſed.

It has been obſerved of the Generals and Conſuls who employed the robuſt and brave Armies of the Roman Empire in their publick Highways, as well as other Works of Uſe and Magnificence, that they contributed as much to the Honour of their Country, and employed their Soldiers as uſefully, in Times of Peace, as in the Field of Battle. Would not ſuch a Regulation ſoon produce the happieſt Effects in England? If the Romans from being a Militia, of which every Individual made a Part, whilſt the State was in its Infancy, found it inconvenient, after Arts and Manufactures gained Ground amongſt them, to appoint ſelect Numbers for the Profeſſion of Arms, who were likewiſe employed

ployed in publick Works; why may not the Experiment be tried in Great-Britain? Are not the Romans a more proper Example than the Switzers?

The Baron de Monteſquieu, obſerving that no Troops in the World were in any Age ſo well diſciplined as the Romans, remarks, that they were enabled, by the Violence of their Exerciſes, and the wonderful Roads they built, to make ſuch long and ſpeedy Marches, that their ſudden Preſence damped the Spirits of their Oppoſers. The ſame ingenious Author ſays, ‘ 'Tis ‘ obſerved in this Age, that the immo- ‘ derate Labour which Soldiers are obli- ‘ ged to undergo deſtroys our Armies; ‘ and yet 'twas by incredible Labour that ‘ the Romans preſerved themſelves. The ‘ Reaſon I take to be this: Their Toils ‘ were continual and uninterrupted, ‘ whereas our Soldiers are ever ſhifting from

'from the Extreams of Labour to the 'Extreams of Idleneſs; than which no-'thing can poſſibly be more deſtructive. 'The Romans, thus inured, were ge-'nerally healthy and vigorous: We do 'not find by Hiſtorians that their Armies, 'which waged War in ſo great a Variety 'of Climates, fell often a Prey to Diſ-'eaſes; whereas, in the preſent Age, 'we daily ſee Armies, without once 'engaging, periſh and melt away, if I 'may uſe the Expreſſion, in a ſingle 'Campaign.'

By the conſtant Employment therefore of the Militia, as hath been here recommended, in the open Air, either in this uſeful Work of improving the Roads, or in military Exerciſes, ſhall we not train up, from ſuch a Nurſery, the fineſt Army in the World? And is there not the greater Neceſſity for having Recourſe to ſome ſuch Method, as the

the King of Great-Britain has no Power (except a temporary one) for preſſing Men into the Land Service? The Buſineſs of recruiting always goes on ſo ſlowly, that we might be ſubdued before we could raiſe, much leſs diſcipline, a compleat Army of ſuch as we now call Volunteers *. Moreover, as every Augmentation of our ſtanding Troops (as it is at preſent managed) brings Diſtreſs in ſome Degree on our Agriculture, and on every Sort of Manufacture; and as on the diſbanding of an Army 'tis too frequently obſerved, that the Streets and Highways are peſtered with Robbers, it may be a Means to prevent thoſe In-

* Though the Method of appointing Men by the Majority of Votes in a Pariſh Veſtry has the Appearance of Compulſion, yet are not many Men entrapped by baſe Arts; or frequently drawn into the Army by the Apprehenſions of Puniſhment from the Civil Power, or the Fear of Creditors: to the Obſtruction of Juſtice, and great Loſs to ſome honeſt Members of the Society.

conveniencies,

conveniences, if we provide for our Armies both in War and Peace in ſuch a Manner as that the Service ſhall be ſought after for the Sake of ſuch good Pay, and the Neceſſity of forcing People into it may be avoided. In a Word, if we deſire to preſerve our Freedom, let us not ſubject ourſelves by a general Militia to a martial Law, which has always been found neceſſary for keeping the Militia in proper Subjection; nor, on the other Hand, let it be ſaid, to our Shame, that the Soldiers of Great-Britain are in any reſpect inferior to thoſe on the Continent. If we deſire to be the moſt formidable People in Europe, (that is, conſidered in a defenſive Light) and have a Regard for our Conſtitution, as ſettled at the Revolution, let us endeavour to procure a conſtitutional Militia in that Senſe of the Word.

If, by the preſent State of Affairs abroad, we are perhaps more than ever expoſed to Danger, and are deſirous of giving new Life and Vigour to our military Diſcipline, let us be extremely cautious that we do not injure our civil Conſtitution. Let the Parliament of Great-Britain appoint yearly, from ſome certain Source, the Number of effective Men neceſſary for our Defence, and for the Preſervation of thoſe ineſtimable Rights and Liberties which are the diſtinguiſhing Privilege of free-born Britons.

FINIS.